

Washington, DC – Today, **Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20)** signed the conference report on the [National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 \(HR 2647\)](#), which authorizes funding for the Department of Defense, raises military pay, and will protect the voting rights of deployed service members and civilians overseas. Congressman Gonzalez issued the following statement on this historic bill.

“As a congressional representative from Military City, USA, as many know San Antonio, I was honored when House Administration Chairman Robert Brady asked me to play a part in helping to craft such an important bill. My colleagues on the [Committee on House Administration](#) and I have been working for years to ensure that men and women overseas, particularly the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who risk their lives to defend us and our values, can exercise their rights as citizens by voting. The provisions we helped craft in the NDAA represent the fruits of that labor.”

The Committee on House Administration and its Subcommittee on Elections, of which Congressman Gonzalez is the Vice Chair, has held a [series of hearings in](#) the 110th and 111th Congress on the challenges faced by voters overseas, both military and civilian. These voters, known as UOCAVA voters after the [Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986](#), have been beset by difficulties registering, securing their ballots, and casting their votes, and the result has been the disenfranchisement of millions of Americans who are serving their country abroad.

The Committee has worked on several bills, some of which the House has passed, and the conference report addresses many of the issues on which they have been focused. Among its provisions, the voting section of the NDAA would:

1. require the creation of protocols to safely use the modern telecommunications for voter registration and ballot transmission;
2. improve procedures for mailing registration forms and ballots; and,
3. remove the superfluous requirements – including things like special paper – that can be so hard for overseas voters, especially those fighting on the front lines, to meet. It would also set up a series of pilot programs.

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